



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:

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EVENT: Director's Award

**FIVE ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS TO RECEIVE
NATIONAL AWARDS FROM DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

Acting Attorney General Peter D. Keisler and Director Kenneth E. Melson, Executive Office for the United States Attorneys (EOUSA) will host the annual EOUSA Director's Award Ceremony, Friday, October 19, 2007 in Washington, D.C.

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced that an unprecedented number of Detroit Assistant US Attorneys – five in total – will be honored by the Department of Justice with prestigious "Director's Awards" for achievements in their cases and other matters.

The following Assistant United States Attorney will be honored:

Ken Chadwell, a seventeen-year office veteran, and a member of the district's National Security Unit. AUSA Chadwell graduated with honors from Wayne State Law School in 1986 where he edited the law review. He previously clerked for a federal district judge in Bay City and worked for a major corporate law firm in Detroit.

John Engstrom, Deputy Chief of the office's Special Prosecutions Unit and a nineteen year veteran of the office. AUSA Engstrom graduated with honors from Wayne State Law

School in 1985, where he as well edited the law review. Engstrom previously clerked for a judge on the district's federal court and on the 6th U.S. circuit court of appeals, and he worked for another major corporate law firm in Detroit.

Kathy McCarthy, Chief of the district's Controlled Substances Unit, has been working in the office since 1995. A 1988 honors graduate of Wayne State Law School, AUSA McCarthy spent the first seven years of her career as an assistant county prosecutor in Michigan, and she has served in both the Civil and the Criminal Divisions of the office.

Leslie Matuja Wizner has served in the Affirmative Litigation Unit of the office's Civil Division since 2002. A 1987 graduate of the Vanderbilt School of Law, AUSA Wizner practiced in a large corporate Chicago law firm and served as corporate counsel for a major health care system based in Detroit.

Mike Wicks, a thirty-two year veteran of the office, has served as the Chief of the Civil Division since 1984. AUSA Wicks graduated with honors from the University of Michigan School of Law in 1974, and he started with the office as a student clerk between his second and third years of law school.

Details about the awards can be found below.

United States Attorney Murphy stated, "Although these are *individual* achievements by excellent attorneys of which they can be justifiably proud, when we take cases from start to finish, we do so with the support and contributions of many, both in our office and in the other federal agencies. Legal assistants, paralegals, colleagues in the office, our IT people, our admin people, our lit support people, our student workers, our law clerks and our supervisors all contribute vitally to the excellent results we are able to obtain. So these awards are actually something of which our entire office can be proud. They are reflective of the extra effort, positive attitude, professional demeanor, and commitment to excellence and service that our employees bring to work every day. The hard work of all of these people makes our nation safer and our system of justice stronger."

The winners will receive their awards on October 19, 2007, at a ceremony hosted by the Attorney General of the United States in Washington, D.C.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan, the fourteenth largest such office in America, prosecutes civil and criminal matters on behalf of the United States of America and its agencies in the 34 counties that make up the eastern half of the state. The office serves a population of more than 6.7 million Michigan residents and is comprised of approximately 100 Assistant United States Attorneys and a similar number of support staff.

Inquiries or interview requests may be lodged with Public Information Officer Gina Balaya, 313.226.9758

Details of the Director's Awards:

Superior Performance as an Assistant United States Attorney

AUSAs John C. Engstrom and Kathryn A. McCarthy were awarded with Superior Performance as an Assistant United States Attorney for the highly successful investigation and prosecution of a complex public corruption scheme involving 19 defendants, including public school officials, building contractors, vendors, and other public officials, for millions of dollars in bogus construction contracts and other services in Macomb County.

Superior Performance as an Assistant United States Attorney

AUSA Leslie Wizner was awarded with Superior Performance as an Assistant United States Attorney for her outstanding work in obtaining the highest fraud settlement in the history of the Federal Housing Authority, \$41 million, from the ABN-AMRO Mortgage Group, as a result of her painstakingly detailed investigation and analysis of hundreds of FHA-insured mortgages, which were discovered to contain false certifications of underwriting, and her determined and creative negotiating skills, involving not only ABN-AMRO but several other parties with complex and differing interests, resulting in a national record-setting False Claims Act settlement with a National Mortgage Group.

Superior Performance in Terrorism Prevention and National Security Protection

AUSA Kenneth Chadwell won an award for his exceptional contributions to protecting the Nation's security and preventing another terrorist attack through the development of innovative and unique prosecution tools. Mr. Chadwell conceived, organized and implemented a multi-agency task force dedicated to the permanent removal of alien terrorists from the United States. The task force is the only one of its kind in the nation, and is a model of inter-agency cooperation and force multiplying concepts to maximize anti-terrorism resources.

Executive Achievement Award

AUSA Michael Wicks was recognized for his exceptional career in service to the Department for more than 30 years as an Assistant U.S. Attorney and 23 years as Chief of the Civil Division for the U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Michigan. Mr. Wicks is without parallel as an exemplary leadership and trusted manager of the Civil Division, which, under his oversight, has expanded greatly in size, complexity and variety of operations during his tenure. Mr. Wicks will retire from Government service at the end of 2007, and will leave behind an extremely effective, well-run, and efficient Civil Division operating at its fullest potential and with exceedingly high morale.